

Top 10 EITC Outreach Strategies for City Officials

STRATEGIES

ACTION STEPS

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| 1. Gather Information. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Contact a regional IRS representative for information on past EITC claims by zip code.• Gather local demographic information (e.g. income, race/ethnicity, household size).• Determine whether there are current EITC outreach efforts and free tax preparation programs in the city; if so, map out where they are targeted or located. |
| 2. Inform City Employees | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Include information on the EITC (including Advance EITC option) in new employee orientation materials.• Periodically add a brief reminder about the EITC to pay stubs between January and April. |
| 3. Use the Bully Pulpit | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop a simple message to communicate the importance of claiming the EITC, let working families know they might qualify and promote free tax preparation services.• Identify EITC outreach as a city priority and encourage other partners to support these efforts.• Utilize public speeches, city council hearings, community functions and townhall meetings to spread the word. |
| 4. Convene Community Partners | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Call a meeting for potentially interested community partners.• Host a breakfast to engage local faith leaders (i.e. ministers, rabbis, etc.).• Formalize a community coalition with an action-oriented steering committee and determine who should coordinate efforts. In some cases this will be the city; in others, a community partner. |
| 5. Launch a Public Education Campaign | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Distribute fliers and hang posters in city agencies, such as public libraries, recreation departments, public transportation or City Hall.• If the city has a website, prominently display information on the EITC during the tax filing season.• Ask the public school system to promote the EITC during parent-teacher conferences or by sending information home with students. |
| 6. Engage Business Leaders in Outreach | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ask utility companies to include inserts in their bills in early winter promoting the EITC.• Encourage grocery store chains to print information about the EITC on grocery bags.• Suggest that restaurants print EITC messages on menus, placemats or tray liners. |
| 7. Get the Media Involved | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Write an op-ed for the local paper or encourage the editors to write prominent articles on the EITC.• Hold a press conference and distribute media packets to spread the word and generate enthusiasm.• Get on a TV or radio talk show, prepare a PSA or air an informational program on a local cable access station.• Reach out to the non-English media. |
| 8. Recruit Free Tax Preparation Volunteers | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Send a letter to city employees or residents encouraging them to serve as volunteer tax preparers.• Ask business partners, particularly local accounting firms, to provide volunteers.• Encourage local colleges or universities to coordinate student volunteer efforts. |
| 9. Use EITC Outreach to Link Families to Other Supports | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Engage financial institutions in outreach efforts to help link EITC recipients to bank accounts.• When families come for free tax assistance, offer information on free or low-cost health insurance, food stamps, child care assistance, etc.• Inform EITC recipients of available financial literacy courses or matched savings programs. |
| 10. Invest City Resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide public space for free tax preparation training and clinics.• Use city information helplines to provide basic EITC information and designate a staff person to manage the city's involvement in EITC outreach.• Provide funding to help cover essential costs and leverage outside dollars. |